

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated February 23, 2004, the present application was filed on June 8, 2000 and included Claims 1-32. Claims 19-26 were divided out without prejudice on October 24, 2002, for a later divisional application, if necessary. A simultaneous election of species resulted in Claims 5-9, 13-18, and 27-32 being withdrawn from further consideration under 37 C.F.R. § 1.142(b). Claims 1-4 and 10-12 remained pending and Claims 33-48 were added by amendment. Claims 41-47 were also withdrawn by the Examiner from further consideration under 37 CFR 1.142(b) as drawn to a nonelected invention and species. The Examiner kindly granted Applicant a personal interview on May 6, 2003, and in accordance with the suggestions of the Examiner, Applicant cancelled Claims 1-4, 10-12, 33-40, and 48. Applicant added new Claims 49-64 in a previous amendment. In this Amendment, Claims 57-66 have been amended in order to correct a numbering error. Claims 49-51, 54, 57-58, 60, and 63-64 have been cancelled. Claims 53, 56, 59 (previously 57), 62 (previously 60) and 66 (previously 64) have been amended. Accordingly, Claims 5-9, 13-32, 41-47, 52, 55, 61 (previously 59) and 65 (previously 63) stand withdrawn and Claims 53, 56, 59, 62, and 66 remain pending for prosecution with Claims 53, 62 and 66 being independent.

I. The 35 U.S.C. § 112 Rejection

Applicant appreciates the withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 49-51, 53, 54, 56-58, 60-62 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point to and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

II. The 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) Rejection

Claims 49-51, 53-54, 56-60, 62-64 and 66 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson et al. '98 in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,670,249 to Ivy et al. and International Publication No. WO 00/25743 to Shih et al. and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,874,098 to Stevens et al.. However, the Examiner indicated that Claims 53, 56, 57, 60 and 64 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claims, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, Applicant has so amended the appropriate claims and has canceled the remaining claims thereby rendering this rejection moot.

III. Conclusion

Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the claims rejection and believes that Claims 53, 56, 59 (previously 57), 62 (previously 60) and 66 (previously 64) as amended are now in condition for allowance. However, if the Examiner desires, the applicant is ready for a telephone interview to expedite prosecution. As always, the Examiner is free to call the undersigned at 816-460-2516. The Examiner's attention is also drawn to the proper correspondence address shown below.

Respectfully submitted,
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